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## WHAT THE CHINESE THINK OF US.

BY STEPHEN BONSAL.

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THE Chinese are not a nation, but a family. Paternalism, pure and simple, is their form of government. "All who dwell within the four seas are brethren." The Emperor is the Son of Heaven and the Father of the State, as the Empress is the Mother. The Emperor, apprised of all that is going on by his officials, the "eyes and the hands of the throne," administers from time to time to his children such correction as their conduct may call for. The Empress cultivates silk-worms and spins silk, thus inculcating officially on her daughters the domestic virtues. Theoretically, at least, the Emperor must recruit his "eyes and hands" from those of his children who have been successful in the Civil Service examinations. Before the examiners, in theory, the son of the poor farmer has as good a chance as the son of an iron-capped duke, and undoubtedly the highest official career is open to the poorest aspirant; indeed, many of the most influential men in China to-day have sprung from the most humble origin. In China, no man is omnipotent, no man above criticism. There is a branch of civil servants, the Censorate, whose duty it is to go round and keep an eye upon the officials. The most powerful must bow before the decrees of the Board of Censors, who do not respect even the Son of Heaven. When his sins of omission and commission have been made clear to him by this Argus-eyed Board, the Emperor, on more than one occasion, to satisfy his own conscience or the murmurings of his people, clothed in the white garb of a penitent, has on the lofty altar of the Temple of Heaven expiated his sins, in plain view of his children and before the Powers of the air and the heavens.

The four hundred millions of China have only four hundred family names among them. It is as though, in the United States,

there were only seventy family surnames—a million Browns, a million Smiths, and so on. The fact that there is thought to be a close blood relationship between each of the million Lis, is shown by the fact that they cannot intermarry. The million Lis may marry with the Skis, but not with one another; so that the myriads of China are all one family, with but four hundred branches. Each Viceroy is independent of interference from the Imperial Government except for grave cause, and yet every coolie knows the ways and the means by which his appeal from the decision of the local Yamen can travel through all the intermediary stages, until it finally reaches the Emperor himself. And again, theoretically, this can be done without the outlay of a single cent. The law of the land is simply a codification of the edicts which have been issued at various times by the reigning Emperors. They have been studied by such eminent Western legists as Sir George Stanton, and pronounced to be humane and admirable in many ways.

If we Westerners could only get over the idea that China did not exist until we discovered her, about 1840, a great deal of progress would be made toward a better understanding of her, and a *modus vivendi* might be reached under which our traders, our missionaries, and even our public ministers would not require to live in constant fear of their lives, and at times to take refuge under the guns of our war vessels. Of course, Westerners have been to China, and travellers have written wondrous tales of this strange people since the days of Herodotus. The Nestorian Christians from Constantinople, in the sixth and seventh centuries of our era, visited Southern China in great numbers; and, at first, in fact for several generations, their propaganda met with astonishing success, and hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of Chinese were converted. Gradually, the friendly attitude of the officials changed; and, finally, missionaries and converts alike were put to death. The accessible information upon this period of Chinese history is very vague and unsatisfactory; but there is reason to believe that the massacres would never have been ordered had not the Nestorians begun to entertain political aspirations. The massacres were probably ordered for the same reasons which induced Taiko Sama, ten centuries later, to put all the Christians in Japan to death. It was recognized that the teachers from the West taught, not only a philosophy with which no one was inclined

to quarrel, but a political system which, if generally accepted, would undermine the time-honored institutions of the country.

All this, however, had been forgotten when Marco Polo and the Venetians came to China, and they were exceedingly well received. Father Ricci and the Jesuits of the seventeenth century were entertained at court; and, when Father Ricci died, a monument was erected to him in the streets of Peking, and the epitaph which the Emperor of that day wrote in honor of his friend from the West declared that Ricci was a great and good man, who, in his life, honored all the precepts of a pure morality. For many centuries, the Mohammedans of China have been permitted to worship God according to their own creed. In Peking, their mosque stands upon the edge, if not within the very precincts, of the Purple Forbidden City. The ministers of the Yamen and the highest dignitaries of the Empire pass by that mosque every day; in it, the hoarse prayers of the followers of Mahomet are never hushed; and yet no man can say with truth that, throughout all the centuries, a stone has been thrown at that building or any disrespect, much less violence, shown to those who worship there. In another quarter of Peking, there is a Christian church and a Christian mission which has never been molested in any of the anti-Christian outbreaks. It belongs to the Greek church and has a curious history. Several hundred years ago, in a campaign along the Amur, thousands of Russian soldiers and Siberian colonists were captured and brought to Peking. The Tzar of that day secured permission from the Emperor to send a mission to them, a band of priests charged with the care of the souls of their fellow-countrymen in exile. The descendants of these captives are, for the most part, orthodox Christians to-day. When in Peking last, I saw the head of the mission, and he told me that he and his predecessors had always been protected by the Imperial Government.

The question, then, is inevitable: Why should the Chinese be liberal toward Mohammedans and Eastern Christians, and so fanatical in their persecution of the Christians from the West? To my mind, there are two answers to this question. The Western Christians have never been so fortunate as to convince the Chinese of their complete innocence of political designs. Ninety-nine out of every hundred certainly have been so innocent, and the history of Christianity can show no prouder page than that

which is written in the blood of our martyrs in China; but it has always been the hundredth man, whether he was a Frenchman, or an Englishman, or a German, who, by his activity in a narrow, national sense, aroused the slumbering suspicions of the Chinese.

The second reason is the distorted idea which the Chinese have received of the teachings of Christianity. I have often, in China and abroad, asked Chinese of different classes why they will not listen to the wise men from the West. "There is not an ounce of narrow-mindedness," I have ventured to say, "in the philosophy of Confucius, and you admit that you have greatly profited by the teachings of the Brahmans and of the Mendicants of the yellow robe. Then, why not give a hearing to the teachers from the West? It may, for all you know, be good talk."

The Chinese have a way of ignoring questions such as these and directing the conversation into other channels, but a dozen times at least I have had my inquiry answered, and invariably as follows:

"When the wise men of the West came to China we made them heartily welcome, and we listened to what they had to say. We followed them with difficulty because all their thought seemed to be occupied by what is going to happen beyond the grave, and we are convinced, with our sage Confucius, that, since we know so little of life, we cannot hope to know anything of death and what is beyond. But we listened to them patiently; no one can deny that. And, as we listened, we heard your wise men denounce our sages and our teachers, in fact all our ancestors, as false teachers, who, they said, had been consigned after death to the place of lost and wailing spirits, in punishment for their unworthiness. We did not like this. We do not think any people would. Not even the Western people, who do not seem to revere their ancestors as religiously as we do ours in China. But we left them alone. Then they followed us, and found us burning incense before our ancestral tablets, and they mocked us. 'The people you worship and bow down to,' they said, 'are at the bottom of a great pit, and are suffering eternal torture because they paid no heed to the words which they never heard.' Many of us laughed at this—it all seemed so absurd—but some of our younger and more hot-headed men abused your teachers; and sometimes, when they persisted in heaping insults upon our ancestors, we told them to be gone, that we could not tolerate them longer upon the sacred soil they came to desecrate. They said they would not go, and that their Governments would protect them in their work of defaming our ancestors. We thought they were liars and the fathers of liars, but we learned that they spoke the truth. Their Governments did protect them, and coerced our Government into protecting them also. Every now and then, however, one of them is killed. His life is paid for in gold, and the man who killed him in defence of the good name of his

people is executed. Do you wonder that we do not care to listen to the teachers from the West?"

I do not wonder, and I have been frequently surprised at the immunity from molestation which the missionaries generally enjoy. The great salient factor of Western Christianity which impresses itself upon the Chinese mind is that we insult the memory of their forefathers and call upon them to do the same. Occasionally, a missionary is killed. He may have fed the starving and healed the sick, but, as a rule, the only phase of his activity which the Chinese understand is that he reviles those whom the Chinese bow down before and worship. People may be driven into the fold by the sword, as they were in the darker ages, and people may be drawn there by argument and the beauty of the philosophy revealed; but no people were ever converted by heaping insults upon their heads and reviling the memory of their ancestors. Of course, there are hundreds of missionaries in China who avoid the question of ancestral worship altogether, because it is very difficult to explain to the Chinese mind why Christians disapprove of it, and in how far they disapprove; but, again, it is the indiscretion, to use a mild word, of the hundredth man that blocks the way, and causes the Chinese to turn a deaf ear to the words of conciliation.

If there is to be peaceful intercourse between us, it is not sufficient to treat the Chinese honestly and honorably; we must impress upon them the fact that we are actuated by lofty motives. I should not like to be compelled to answer whether in the past we have always complied with the first condition, but there is no possibility of doubt that we have failed to fulfill the second. The Chinese are convinced that the Western powers are bandits, held together by the lust of plunder which is common to them all. Many Americans, and not a few who have come into close official contact with the Chinese, are inclined to think that the Chinese divide the Western powers into two classes—one composed of the predatory wolves, Russia, Great Britain, Germany and France; and the other of the mild and gentle United States of America. I do not think this opinion has any foundation in fact, and later on I shall state the reasons for my disbelief.

It would be of immense value, I think, to secure from the Chinese a statement of their grievances. This has never been done; probably it never can be done. I shall only attempt to approximate it. The few Chinamen who can make a coherent state-

ment in English are not Chinese at all; they are Shanghai and Hong Kong Englishmen, who, in acquiring a Western education, have entirely lost the Chinese point of view. There are a few Westerners who have lived all their lives in China, and have, in a very great measure, penetrated the inmost thoughts of the Chinese; but—at least this is my experience—they have invariably lost the power to make a statement which can be understood by the Western mind, and they have lost the Western point of view.

Certainly in America, China, until well on in this present century, was regarded as the Ultima Thule, and not as our great neighbor across the Pacific. This was natural enough, because, instead of following the trail of empire westward to the East, we continued to travel to Asia by the way of Europe and Africa. But, in the early decades of this century, there began to take place changes in our methods of transportation, both by sea and land, which will one day be recognized by our historians as inaugurating the greatest revolution which the world has ever seen. This change in the conditions of travel has been the primary cause of most of the wars and foreign conflicts that mark the story of the century. Suddenly the world, that had been so vast, grew wonderfully small; and, with continents gridironed by railways and full-powered steamers penetrating the farthest seas, the most antagonistic civilization and the hermit nations of the East were brought, very much against their wills, into contact with the enterprise of the West. And the Chinese awoke to find themselves in the very midst of a new world they did not understand.

From time immemorial, the only immediate contact of China with the West was through the traders who resorted to Canton for the purpose of barter. Through Canton, the products of China reached Europe in small quantities many centuries ago; but it is not my purpose to go farther back than the foundation of the Portuguese factory in Macoa and of the depots of the British East India Company along the Canton River. Commercial relations were maintained for many generations, and they were immensely profitable both to the European factors and to the hong merchants of Canton. The footing upon which the Western merchants were admitted to commercial relations with the Chinese was a most humiliating one. In those days, there was not an open door, and our traders did not presume to ask for one. There was only a hole in the Canton wall, through which the slender stream

of commerce trickled. To this hole in the wall, the Western traders approached very humbly, and through it they passed their goods and received their ounces of silver or the equivalent in silks. But, thirsty for gold, the Western trader swallowed the insults and the humiliations; or rather he paid himself for them by swindling the Eastern merchants, who had not the remotest idea of the value of their products on the Western markets. For one hundred years, the Japanese exchanged goods with the Dutch on a basis of one ounce of gold for four of silver. They were naturally angry when they discovered how they had been over-reached: Such privileges as the Western traders on the Canton River enjoyed in 1820 were not under the sanction of the Imperial Government. It was a provincial arrangement entirely. Generally, the hong merchants were able to corrupt the Viceroy of the day, and so the illicit trade went on. As Canton became more accessible, the appearance in those waters of foreign merchant vessels more frequent, and the hong merchants more wealthy and consequently more powerful, the Cantonese authorities were induced to enter into an agreement with the foreign traders to protect and regulate the trade. It was in this way that the West gained its first foothold in China. There is no reason to believe that the agreement was made with the sanction of the Imperial Government in Peking, and there is much reason for supposing that the first knowledge which the Imperial Government received of it was through the popular outbreaks occasioned by the dissatisfaction at the spread of the use of Indian opium, which had become the principal commodity sold by the Western factors, and by the scarcity of silver, of which the foreign merchants had well nigh drained the country.

To make clear the action of China under these circumstances, it is necessary to take a bird's-eye view of that Eastern world in which China ruled supreme, and which was as far away from contact with and understanding of our civilization as though its seat had been upon the planet Mars. The Middle Kingdom, the eighteen provinces between the four seas, constituted, in the eyes of the Chinese, the civilized world. They knew of the existence of other countries and other peoples, but these countries were wild jungles or waste places, the people savage, and it was the part of wisdom for the Children of Heaven to have just as little to do with them as possible. The great civilizing force that emanated

from China, however, could not fail to have some effect upon the outside Barbarians, and these latter gradually, in the Chinese mind, fell into two classes—those who were receptive, and those who were not receptive, of the softening influences of Chinese civilization and culture. The countries occupied by the receptive Barbarians soon became satellites to the Chinese planet. Whatever knowledge they had came from Peking and was gratefully received. At the time of which we are speaking, Chinese law and Chinese civilization not only was accepted by the people of China proper, aggregating, as they do, at least one-quarter of the human family, but by Korea on the northwest, the island kingdoms of Liu Chu in the China Sea, Siam, Burmah and Cochin-China on the south, Tibet and Nepaul on the southwest, Kashgar and Samarkand on the west, and the Mongolian tribes on the north. The relations which existed between China and her satellites are easy to understand, but difficult to define. China was not, in any sense, a suzerain power, nor were the satellites tributary states in the meaning which these words have with us. Mr. Holcombe, for many years acting minister of the United States in Peking, defines the relation as that between an elder brother and younger brothers. Certainly, no tribute was ever exacted, nor was any paid. Presents were exchanged at the New Year and upon the accession of a new sovereign, and congratulatory scrolls at other seasons; but China always gave more than she received; and there is abundant evidence to show that her protection of her lesser neighbors was absolutely unselfish. Japan was the one disturbing element in this otherwise serene world, and even Japan did not ruffle the equanimity of the Chinese as much as she has in later days. So far as we know, she never invaded China proper. Korea was the field of battle, and ultimately Japan was always worsted.

It was into this happy community of fraternal nations that we plunged in 1840, with the awkward grace of the proverbial bull in the china-shop. Naturally, there was a great smashing of crockery. In Canton, there arose troubles and disturbances such as are natural when the traders of antagonistic civilizations, each animated by a desire to swindle the other, come together; and, finally, the Imperial authorities in Peking sent a commissioner to the port to break off all intercourse with the outsiders, not only because the principal commodity received from them was opium,

but because China regarded the growing trade as an inevitable source of trouble in the near future. One must remember that, by the way of Nepaul and Tibet, news had reached the Peking court of what was transpiring in India. It was known how the humble, little trading post on the Island of Bombay had, in a hundred years, at the expense of the Empire of the Great Mogul, grown into British Hindustan. The Imperial Commissioner acted, doubtless, quite in accordance with his instructions, and he was surprised when the British Government took exception to the course which he pursued. He seized the ships that were waiting to discharge their cargoes, and all the goods of foreigners on sale, and dumped them into the river. Great Britain acted, as she always does, promptly. Her course has been universally denounced, and, as is usually the case, most unsparingly by her own people, yet it is difficult to see how she could have acted otherwise. The question was not whether the property destroyed consisted principally of catties of opium or cases of Bibles; it was whether the Chinese had any right to destroy the property at all. From the Western point of view they certainly had not. The right of the trader to come to Canton had been guaranteed by the Cantonese authorities; and, resting upon these agreements, the Government of Great Britain demanded that an indemnity be paid for the property destroyed. Such a demand had never been made upon the Government of China before. They had had commercial treaties, notably with Siam and Burmah, and they had broken them or denounced them whenever they chose to do so, and Siam and Burmah had never presumed to impugn the high considerations that had induced the Middle Kingdom to take the step. Impressed with the fact that they were acting for the best interests of all concerned and abolishing an abuse which, if tolerated, would lead to serious trouble, China acted as she would have done toward Siam or Burmah; and, when called to account, the Peking Government was not at a loss to defend the action of their commissioner, on the ground that reasons of state and of high morality required him to take the course he did. In the war that ensued, China cut a poor figure. Nanking was besieged, and the Chinese were forced into a treaty by which they formally recognized the rights of the traders, gave England the island of Hong Kong as a depot, and paid, for the property that had been destroyed and as a war indemnity, twenty-one million dollars.

The war of 1860 between the Western Powers and China was the natural sequence of the Opium War. It is quite unnecessary to examine into the immediate, determining causes. In 1842, the Western traders secured a piece of the Chinese pork. It did not satisfy, but only served to whet, their appetites. A year after the treaty of Nanking was signed, the negotiators of the treaty, who thought they had drawn up a clever paper, were openly ridiculed for their pains. At first, Hong Kong did not prosper, and its selection as a commercial depot came to be regarded as a mistake; and then, of course, the single open port of Canton, hampered by innumerable restrictions, was totally inadequate for the trade of the West. "We must have more treaty-ports; we must have substantial concessions, settlements where our people can live under their own flags and be amenable only to their own laws." So the feeling grew from 1842 to 1860. For one man who made a fortune in the China trade, a hundred hungry and unfortunate beggars came out to take his place. There were notable and noble exceptions, whose memory is still fragrant with the Chinese; but it is undeniable that the great majority of these quick fortune-hunters did not allow their efforts to be hampered by any code of morality whatsoever, be it Christian, Confucian, or merely Commercial. The experience of eighteen years of intercourse with the outsiders had only strengthened the Chinese in their original belief, that it would be better for them and for China to have nothing to do with the Barbarians. The Chinese set to work with all their might to stem the irresistible course of events. They opposed the expansion of the Western trade and the opening of new markets, with the result that there ensued another disastrous war, which ended only with the Western Powers in possession of Peking, the Chinese Emperor in flight, his Summer Palace in flames and his artistic collections on their way to fill the museums of Europe and the galleries of private collectors. Then came the treaty, and the two points which the Chinese, though suppliant for peace, most stubbornly contested were the demands of the Western Powers that their ambassadors should be admitted to permanent residence in the capital, and that more treaty-ports be opened to their traders.

To the first demand, the Chinese statesmen protested that they had not the power to protect the life and property of foreigners in Peking, because public opinion was so prejudiced against them.

“You must protect them,” replied the Western negotiators; “if a hair of their heads is harmed the lives of your Emperor and your Princes become forfeit.” Against more treaty ports and the navigation of the inland waters of China by white traders, for whose advantage it was expressly stipulated that they were not to be considered amenable to Chinese law, the Chinese again protested most vigorously. They said in effect:

“We were of the opinion, when you first came out here, that it was unwise to enter upon closer relations with you. But your leaders were of a different way of thinking, and we allowed ourselves to be convinced, and at your solicitation we consented to the experiment. Now see the result. For eighteen years we have been constantly embroiled; and now another disastrous war has been fought in which many good men on both sides have lost their lives. This is not the first time that strangers have come to China; but it is the first time that men of your honorable races have come, and now, after twenty years of contact, we have come to the conclusion that we have nothing in common. We do not speak the same language, we worship not the same gods; the color of our skin is different, and our codes of morality are widely opposed. The closer intercourse between us has only brought with it more frequent misunderstandings. The white man never enters upon honorable wedlock with the yellow woman, and the yellow man is not admitted to the society of white women, even of the most humble category. Our point of contact in Canton has occasioned two wars, and we are never at peace. What result can we expect from the opening of more sea ports and the inland rivers other than constant strife? Therefore, we pray you to depart, and we wish you all success and happiness in that part of the world in which you were born.”

Might prevailed, of course. The ports and the rivers were opened, and the representatives of the foreign Powers were installed in Peking by force of arms, and by force of arms they have been maintained there ever since. The Chinese line of argument received no attention whatsoever, except from the comic papers of the West. Of course, those authorized to negotiate the treaty endeavored to answer the Chinese arguments, but Sir Harry Parkes, one of the negotiators, confessed that he found it very difficult to do so, because they were so childish and because of the laughter they provoked in the breasts of the Western men present. However, with as serious countenances as they could muster, the envoys of the Powers assured the Chinese that white men and yellow, black men and red, were all one family, all children of God; that the traders from the West did not come to China because they wanted to, but under the compulsion of poverty, to get money with which to feed their wives and children; and they expressed

some surprise that men who did honor to the Confucian morality should try and take the bread and butter from the mouths of their white brothers.

Soon the Chinese, who also had wives and children to support, hearing of the money that was to be made in the Western countries, went in considerable numbers to the United States and to Australia, following the same inducements that had brought the Western traders to China. When, for the very same reasons as affected the Western traders in China, their presence became the cause of strife and constant trouble, they were excluded by acts of Parliament and of Congress from entering the Western countries. When the Chinese Government called upon the State Department for an explanation of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Department replied that the people of the United States had been compelled to discriminate against the Chinese because of a certain "immiscibility" of race that distinguished them. The State Department coined a new word; but the fundamental idea was the same as that which the Chinese advanced in 1842 and 1860, when they were laughed at for the childishness and utter absurdity of their position. The legality of the anti-Chinese legislation being contested, the question was taken to the highest courts, and in 1893 the position of the Chinese negotiator in 1860, Prince Kung, as well as that of our Congressmen in 1882, was pronounced by the Supreme Court of the United States to be based upon the requirements of morality and in accord with the precedents of public law.

The Chinese did not waste any time or fireworks in celebrating their moral victory. They knew it would prove merely academic in its consequences, or rather in its lack of consequences. They felt no safer because the State Department and the Supreme Court upheld their position of 1860. In the course of the intervening years they had become convinced that the white man of the West, as well as the yellow man of the East who accepted his civilization, had but one guiding star of conduct, and that was neither Eastern nor Western morality, but his keen appreciation of what was best for his own immediate material advantage. They recognized that the day when an international dispute could be settled by reference to the Analects of Confucius was over, and they did not try to reinforce their position with apposite citations from the writings of their sages, or by specious promises from the intruders. They bowed to the inevitable and bought quick-firing guns.

The facts which forced the Chinese to the foregoing conclusion, so uncomplimentary to our civilization, are not far to seek, though they are not made unduly prominent by Western writers and are rarely mentioned by the Chinese themselves. Until the steal of Shan-tung by Germany, the Chinese regarded the French as the most utterly perverse of the outside barbarians. At first they, too, had come to the hole in the Canton wall—China's sorrow, as her statesmen think, through which has come more harm to the children of Han than by all the floods of the Yellow River. They only wanted to trade, they protested; yet, despite their promises and assertions, out of the Chinese world, in one short cycle of Cathay, the French have carved their Indo-China empire, comprised of Cochin-China, Cambodia, Annam, Tonking and half of Siam. The deposed or imprisoned kings of these countries, while they no longer send handsome New Year's presents to Peking (they are too poor), have, there is no doubt, given their cousins of the Manchu dynasty full accounts of their experiences. Samarcand has become a Russian province; Burmah and Ava British. Germany has seized Shan-tung, a province right out of the heart of the sacred soil of China proper, and the Chinese ministers abroad have submitted maps to the Emperor and the Privy Council on which the Empire is divided up and distributed among the predatory Powers.

The reasons which the Western Powers who have participated in this spoliation of China adduce, not in defence of their conduct—for they hold it requires none—but in explanation of it, do not appeal to the Chinese mind. The Western Powers maintain that they were compelled to interfere in the internal affairs of China to preserve law and order; to which the Chinese reply that law and order had reigned for hundreds of years, and was only disturbed by the coming of the barbarians. The Chinese still hold that nations, like individuals, have a perfect right to choose their associates in business or in pleasure. When they declined to trade with us, they think we should have immediately withdrawn from their world, perhaps protesting as we did so, to save our "face," that we did not care to trade with them. And so there would have been an end of the matter.

In spite of some evidence to the contrary, the Chinese maintain that their expansion south of the Yangtze was the result of accretion and not of conquest or colonization. There are to be

found, however, many instances in the history of China which show that her statesmen have appreciated what might be called the exigencies of *noblesse oblige*, and that they have recognized the duty of the paramount power to maintain law and order in the adjacent countries as well as within her own boundaries. The most notable illustration of the fact that the Chinese do not hold with our anti-imperialists that the Dyaks of Borneo have an inalienable right to pursue head-hunting, and the Bolo-men of Luzon to run amuck, is to be found in their intervention in Formosa for the suppression of piracy about 1650. It was a disagreeable task, this policing of Formosan ports and waters. In two hundred and fifty years her Formosan sovereignty cost China millions, and many thousands of men, but she never contemplated a policy of national convenience and "scuttle," though she was undoubtedly only too glad to relinquish her task to the more vigorous hands of Japan in 1895. In a word, then, what China objects to is not the police work which the English are doing in the Malay Peninsula and Borneo, the United States in the Philippines and the Dutch in Java and Sumatra, but that criterion of civilization formulated by the German Emperor which places them on the same level as the man-hunting Malays.

When we look upon the attack upon our Legations in Peking and the subsequent siege to which our representatives and their families have been subjected as an isolated fact, it seems to be the most outrageous proceeding that modern history has had to record. I am conscious of having said, when the first news of the indiscriminate slaughter of our people reached us, the people whose bread I had broken, whose hospitality I had enjoyed, to many of whom I was bound by the ties of close friendship, that China had placed herself outside the pale of civilization. I would not say so now, and the fact that the slaughter has been less than was announced has nothing to do with my change of opinion. It is due to an impartial examination of the essential facts in the history of our intercourse with China for the last sixty years. In doing as they have done, in turning their guns not only upon the foreign ministers but upon Sir Robert Hart, the man who for thirty years has been their best friend and most honorable counsellor, the Chinese have committed an act of egregious folly; yet I am convinced that, should he escape their bullets and survive, Sir Robert Hart will say that they succumbed to a provocation which might

well have disturbed the equilibrium of a race under better self-control.

The Chinese have recognized how sacred is the person of a public minister from time immemorial, and very rarely has a properly accredited envoy been molested within their borders; but they draw a distinction between ministers who are forced upon them and those they are willing to receive. The representatives of the Western Powers in Peking belong to the former category. The Chinese have never withdrawn their protest against the presence of these ministers in the capital of the Empire; it has only been drowned in musketry fire. "We cannot protect your envoys," they said. "The people of Peking will not accept your representatives as envoys of peace, and they will not treat them with honor and respect, as they do the envoys from Korea and Nepaul, because they regard them as heralds of war and military spies, whose duty it is to inform their governments when the opportune moment has come for a campaign of spoliation." They have asked, time and again, that the Legations might at least be removed to a seaport, and they have pointed to the example of Morocco, where the foreign missions remain at Tangier and only go up to the capital every three or four years.

If the attack upon the foreign ministers had been made by the Boxers alone, the Chinese, in view of their protest and confession of weakness which is on file in every Foreign Office of the Western world, would have considered themselves, morally at least, in no wise responsible for the consequences. They knew, of course, that the Powers would hold them responsible, and they probably endeavored to protect the Legations until the Throne was in danger. Then, charity beginning at home, with the Chinese as with other people, they stepped aside; or perhaps, under the pressure of circumstances, the Imperial authorities even took an active part in the attacks and the siege.

Of course, I have no means of knowing what the Chinese think of us in the light of these more recent events. Their point of view has not been even touched upon in the numerous and exhaustive cablegrams and letters which have reached us since the situation became acute, though the Tsung-li-Yamen have made it very plain that the attacks which "bandits and robbers" made upon the Legations were subsequent to the bombardment and capture of the Taku forts by the Powers, and in consequence of that ill-advised

step. Following out the line of thought which I have pursued in the preceding pages, it is, however, not difficult to make a picture of the events in Peking somewhat as Chinese eyes see them.

A strange secret society was spreading over the northern provinces—always the prelude of revolution in China. It was in this way the Taiping rebellion began in 1850. The object of its propaganda no one outside the society seems to have known very clearly. The Imperial Clan thought it was directed against the Manchu dynasty; the missionaries against the Christian work; the traders said it was a menace to trade. At all events, Mr. Conger, in his dispatch which left Peking only a few days before the Legations were besieged, said he was satisfied that the Government was at last alive to the danger of the situation, and doing what it could to stay the spread of the organization. Chinese methods are very strange in our sight, and it is quite conceivable that the Government appeared to favor the Boxers while planning their overthrow; certain it is, however, that Mr. Conger, after a long audience with the ministers of the Tsung-li-Yamen, took an optimistic view of the situation, and in his last dispatch to the State Department put on paper his opinion that the worst was over. A few days later, and before the Chinese Government had committed any overt act to which we could take exception, at a moment when, so far as we know, nothing had happened to change Mr. Conger's opinion that the Government was doing what it could to save the situation, the foreign naval commanders, in council off the mouth of the Pei Ho River, sent an ultimatum to the Chinese commander at Taku, demanding the evacuation of the forts that had been confided to his keeping; and, while his troops were to march out unmolested, his cannon and his munitions of war were to be left in the hands of the Powers. At this time, both telegraphic and railroad communication with Peking, a hundred miles away, had been destroyed by the rioters, and the last news which had come through was a rumor, since unhappily verified, that the German minister had been assassinated on his way from the Legation to the Foreign Office. The Western naval commanders seem to have acted in hot blood and on the spur of the moment. All their thought was of the unfortunate Ketteler, and not of his widow and the thousand and odd almost defenceless men, women and children who were shut up in the city, where the power to protect them was manifestly so weak.

It is absolutely necessary to an understanding of what followed to bear in mind the true sequence of events. An examination of the inflammatory articles in Western papers, without distinction as to nationality, would lead one to suppose that the bombardment was an answer to the unprovoked assault upon the Legations. The official information that has reached us shows quite the contrary to have been the case. The report of the murder of Baron von Ketteler reached Tientsin on June 16th. The naval commanders of the Western Powers ordered the bombardment of the Taku forts on June 17th. On the same day, news reached Tientsin that the German marines, on learning of Von Ketteler's death, attacked and burnt down the Chinese Foreign Office, a pretty high-handed proceeding under any provocation, certainly an act not calculated to convince the Chinese that we always conform to the requirements of public law. The information which has reached us from many sources is identical upon one point. The first attack upon the British Legation was made on June 19th, two days after the bombardment of Taku and the burning of the Chinese Foreign Office by the German marines.

It is pleasant to be able to record here that the American admiral refused to concur in the action of his colleagues, and stated that he thought their ultimatum not only without justification in public law, but suicidal in policy. The sequel has shown how right he was. There is nothing in the recent history of the American navy of which we have more reason to be proud than the wise and discreet behavior of Admiral Kempff.

The Chinese commander very properly replied to the ultimatum, that he would not give up the forts except upon the order of his Government, and that it was not possible for him to obtain instructions from Peking within the time allowed. When the foreign ships moved into position to carry out their threat to bombard, he opened fire first. It was his right to do so, and it was good fighting tactics, too. In a few hours, the forts were reduced to ruins, and such of the garrison as escaped the bombardment were cut down by the landing parties. Few of the Taku soldiers reached Peking; but those who did had a tale of horror to tell, even if they confined themselves to a strict recital of the truth, which, under the circumstances, it is allowable to doubt.

The news that a couple of thousand Chinese had been blown to pieces, and an Imperial fortress destroyed, reached Peking at a

moment when an announcement of a less startling character would have sufficed to destroy the balance of power between the Government and the revolutionists. It is conceivable that the people of Peking, without distinction of party or of class, experienced, at this moment, the same feelings of horror and indignation which found expression in every capital and in every hamlet of Christendom when the news came that our people had been massacred in Peking. They thought of nothing but revenge, and they threw themselves upon our Legations like wolves. It is very probable that the Government did nothing to help the besieged, and that their salvation up to the present is due entirely to the stout hearts of the men who manned the fragile walls behind which, for weeks, gentle women have cowered, a prey to fears more horrible than death. But, if the conduct of the Chinese was in flagrant violation of international law, it must also be remembered that their provocation was great, and that the first act of savagery, for as yet we know none of the details of the murder of Baron von Ketteler, came from our side. It is more than probable that Baron von Ketteler was killed by some native of Shan-tung, who saw in him only the representative of the people who had stolen his home and hoisted a foreign flag over it. It is also possible that the murder was a personal matter. Some years ago, the Secretary of the United States Legation in Tokyo was assassinated as he was returning from the Japanese Foreign Office. It turned out that there had been some serious personal differences between Mr. Heusken and a Japanese, and that the latter had taken this way, not entirely unknown in some parts of America, of settling the dispute once for all. The Japanese Government appreciated the gravity of the situation, and the question was soon settled in a manner which did credit to all concerned; but, of course, we had not in the meantime complicated matters by bombarding Yokohama or Nagasaki. While this may have been the fate of Baron von Ketteler, for all we know to the contrary, it is more than probable that in ordering the occupation of Shan-tung, without any excuse or justification except that he had the power to maintain his position there, the German Emperor signed the death-warrant of his talented minister, who, incidentally it should be said, had no hand in the Shan-tung deal whatever.

We have come to the parting of the ways in our relations with China. A moment of thoughtlessness or of indecision, and we

may be involved in a war which would tax the resources of Christendom. The event is not entirely in our hands, and there is the danger. The President made our position very clear before sending troops to China, and in doing so he has not pleased the predatory Powers. He has sent troops to protect our envoy and our citizens, to enforce our treaty rights, and not to carve up China. The Chinese, however, are not given to subtle distinctions in foreign affairs, and they see no difference between those who interfere with them for trade advantages or for territorial concessions. Indeed, they rather think the apparent division of the Powers on matters of policy is part of their game. If the expedition to the relief of the Peking Legations should fail—which is quite possible—we would probably not have the option of making peace or war with China. China would make war upon us, and we would have to accept the gage of battle whether we wanted to or not.

If the Western Powers determine upon the conquest of China, if they decide that the peace of the world demands that the Chinese civilization shall be crushed or converted, as that of the murderous Malays has been, for instance, we cannot stop them, though, unhappily, the United States will inevitably become involved in the consequences of such a step.

This being the case, we have an undoubted right to insist that the predatory Powers count the cost of their war of spoliation and weigh carefully the consequences of defeat and failure, as they will affect our own interests as well as theirs.

China has often been conquered, but the Chinese have never been vanquished. They have never failed to assimilate their conquerors in the course of a few succeeding generations. The Golden Horde of Kublai Khan, the Mongols and the Manchus have all become Chinese, and their conquest of China was not a matter of two or three campaigns, but the result of wars which lasted hundreds of years.

Their acquaintance with us has taught the Chinese the advantage of unity; and it may be said that, *vis-a-vis* to the foreign devils, all who dwell in the eighteen provinces between the four seas are brothers. Once the Powers begin their career of conquest, they cannot draw back, for reasons of policy, if for no other. In this war, we know already, there is to be no repetition of the military promenade of the Anglo-French forces to Peking in 1860. Then we captured the capital of China, and no more attention was

paid to the expedition by the vast majority of the Chinese than a sleeping man pays to a fly walking over his face. The conditions are very different now. The Chinese have learned their lesson. The Chinese do not intend to submit any longer to the international bullies, and they have lost all the provinces they mean to lose, by trickery at least. The most surprising of the recent events is the way in which the Chinese have entered upon an offensive campaign in the north. They have crossed the Amoor and have captured Russian towns, and, for a time at least, cut off all communication between Eastern Siberia on one side and Trans-Baikalia on the other.

It is not only that all the improvements of modern warfare favor the combatant holding the inside line. It is a fact that the defensive position of the Chinese is much stronger than it was in 1860. The defeat, almost a disaster, which overtook Admiral Seymour's column may be but the prelude to still more costly experiences. Since 1860, the Chinese have built a telegraph system which practically reaches all the provinces. It is worked and controlled entirely by Chinese. To supplement it, there is a very perfect courier system under the War Department, by means of which Imperial orders are carried through the country at the rate of two hundred miles a day. The Chinese have arsenals and forges, at which, without foreign assistance or supervision, they can, and do, make very serviceable rifles, and turn out many tons of ammunition a day. They could, I believe, continue to produce these munitions of war indefinitely, even if all Christendom were leagued against them. Bitter experience teaches us that it is hard to combine all the Christian traders against the barbarian, as long as he has money and is willing to pay. The military problems to be solved in an invasion of China cannot be overrated. The fall of Peking would have no effect on the war, once the Chinese are satisfied that this time the Western Powers mean to hold the land they conquer. There are in China a dozen cities in which the Imperial Government could be established without an appreciable loss of prestige. The war, if fought to a finish, would carry the armies of the Western Powers into central China, and there the difficulties of transportation and of sustenance would prove well nigh insuperable. The most striking illustration of our want of preparation for the campaign of conquest into which the European Powers are drifting, and from which we will suffer, whether we

participate in it or not, is furnished by the apostle of the crusade, the Emperor William himself. Two months after calling the Powers together to a holy war, and announcing that China must be subdued and all the Chinese slaughtered to make room for Western culture, he lands three hundred men in Tientsin to make good his word and to help to do the work. Three hundred men are not a drop in the bucket. Three hundred men could not maintain law and order in one ward of Tientsin, once the Chinese are satisfied we have come to stay. Further, the Tientsin reports tell us that the German contingent, hardly more than a corporal's guard as it is, has arrived without suitable equipment. It may, however, be true, as the Berlin correspondents announce, that the Emperor, always thoughtful and considerate, has sent out by the German mail three hundred stomach-protectors for his soldiers in Asia. This is not a tropical war, and stomach-protectors are not worn in Northern China except by those who find it advisable to wear them everywhere. It is very cold comfort the German contingent will get out of their stomach-protectors. The valley of the Pei Ho is as cold as any place in the world, and, if the stomach-protectors are not reinforced by sheepskin jackets, buffalo sleeping robes and jack-boots lined with flannel before November 15th, His Imperial Majesty's crusaders will be frozen to death. It is undoubtedly true that he has presented Count von Waldersee with what the Berlin papers describe as a "tropical war-costume," similar, but with improvements, to the one which the Emperor wore in Palestine. Since he is to have command over our troops, it is to be hoped that the German Field-Marshal goes to the war better equipped in other respects than he is in the matter of clothing.

And once China is conquered and parcelled out among the Powers, our troubles will not be over—they will only have begun. The Yellow Peril has many phases, and they are not all imaginary. The Russian Government has grave fears on this subject, as I had an opportunity to learn during my visit to Eastern Siberia and the Amoor provinces in 1896. Despite the sturdy fibre of their race, every now and then "yellow" spots, as they are called, it is not necessary to enter into details, appear in the Cossack *stanitzas* which line the north bank of the river. The Russians regard them as an illustration of the sinister power which a compact family of four hundred million people exert upon neighbors of low social efficiency, and they ask themselves what will happen when the river

is crossed, and, no longer in rival camps, the Russians and the Chinese live together in one community. With arms in hand, the Russians rather underestimate the Yellow Peril; but they seem to fear—and not without reason, I think—the Chinese policy of assimilation that comes with peace. They remember that China is a sea which has salted all the rivers that have run into it; that, sooner or later, the Chinese have conquered all their conquerors.

This is where the old policy has landed us. Why not inaugurate a new? We have always treated the Chinese as though they were without feelings, and without vanity, pride or combative-ness; and yet every one who knows them will tell you they have all of these qualities. When we are in a position to exact the punishment of the men who fired upon our Legations, whether they be princes of the Clan, or Boxers, let us listen to what the Chinese will have to say about the bombardment of the Taku forts. It will be a new departure, and it might work wonders. We might “civilize” the Chinese by showing them some consideration and treating them with common decency. The old policy of knocking the Chinese over the head has not brought satisfactory results—they have too many heads. A common ground might be reached by admitting, for instance, that it is as possible for Western admirals as for Eastern princes and wild sectaries to do, in hot blood, things they never would have been guilty of upon mature consideration. If we do this, there will be no danger of war, and we shall be spared a conflict into which no one who knows what it may come to mean can think of entering with a light heart.

STEPHEN BONSAL.